DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 172 449 EA 011 889

TITLE	The District Master Plan for School Improvement: Instructions and Suggestions. Revised.
INSTITUTION	California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.
PUB DATE	78
NOTE	41p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications Sales, State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, California 95802 ($1.50)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Advisory Committees; *Board of Education Role; Citizens Councils; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Master Plans; *Program Planning; *School Role
IDENTIFIERS	*California; California Assembly Bill 65; School Site Councils

ABSTRACT

This document provides step-by-step instructions for completing a school district master plan. It can be used by administrative personnel to pull together those policies, procedures, and criteria that can enhance an effective working partnership between school and district. The document uses boldface, italic type to identify instructions set forth in California state laws (Assembly Bill 65), followed by a clarification of the intent of the requirements and suggestions of what to do and to avoid. Examples of topics covered in developing a master plan include providing the public with information on school improvement, considering school site councils, and serving students with special needs. One section of the handbook is devoted to developing strategies to assist schools receiving grants and all schools implementing consolidated application programs. The appendices offer suggestions to small districts and districts in cooperatives. Also, a composite guide is offered at the end for continuing development and review of a school district master plan. (Author/LD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED172449

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE DISTRICT MASTER PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:

INSTRUCTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Wilson Riles – Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, Revised 1979

EA 011 569

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Calif. State Dept. of Educ.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This publication, which was edited and prepared for photo-offset production by the Bureau of Publications, California State Department of Education, was published by the Department, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act

1979

A list of publications which are available from the State Department of Education may be obtained by writing to Publications Sales, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802. Publications pertaining specifically to the School Improvement Program are as follows (those marked with an asterisk are available in Spanish also, at the price indicated):

Assistance Guide for Forming Program Review Consortia (1978)	NC
Bilingual Education Services Guide (1979)	$1.25
Discussion Guide for the California School Improvement Program (1978)†	1.50
District Master Plan for School Improvement (1979)	1.50
Establishing School Site Councils: California School Improvement Program (1977)†	1.50
Planning Handbook (1978)†	1.50
Guide for Assessing Program Compliance with State and Federal Regulations (1978)*	NC
Guide for Ongoing Planning (1977)	1.10
Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program (1978)	1.50
Handbook for Assessing a Secondary School Program (1979)	1.50
Handbook for Planning an Effective Reading Program (1979)	1.50
How to Make the Best School Site Council in the World (1979)††	NC
Manual of Requirements for Schools Funded Through the Consolidated Application (1979)	1.50
Procedures for Elementary Program Review Teams (1978)*	NC
Procedures for Secondary Program Review Teams (1979)*	NC
State Preschool Guidelines (1979)	1.50

*Single copies only.

†Also available in Spanish at the same price.

††Written requests on official stationery from public schools and public agencies only will be honored; all other requests must be directed to the author, Jean Rosaler, Box 130, 1820 Union St., San Francisco, CA 94123.

Contents

Page

Preface iv

Introduction 1
The Purpose of the District Master Plan 1
The Design of This Document 2

Instructions and Suggestions for Completing the District Master Plan 3
Establishing a Basic Framework for School Improvement 3
1. Procedures for Providing Information 4
2. Policies for Establishing School Site Councils 6
3. Policies Regarding Responsibilities of School Site Councils 6
4. Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan 7
5. Plan for Phasing In Schools 8
6. Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities 9
7. Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans 10
8. Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs 11
9. Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs 12
10. Requests for Release Time to Advise Students or Conduct Staff Development Programs 13

Instructions and Suggestions for Completing Strategies to Assist Schools 15
1. District Strategies to Assist Schools Receiving Planning Grants 15
2. District Strategies to Assist Schools Implementing Consolidated Application Programs 15
Completion Date for the District Master Plan 17

Appendix A. Special Provisions for Small Districts Having Only One School Serving a Grade Level 18
Appendix B. Special Instructions for Districts in Cooperatives 19
Appendix C. District Master Plan for School Improvement: Guide for Development and Review 20
Appendix D. Acknowledgments 35

Preface

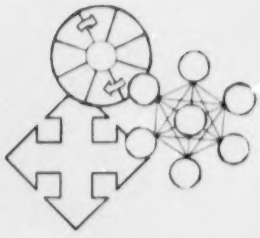
This 1979 version of *The District Master Plan for School Improvement: Instructions and Suggestions* reflects several important changes in the district master plan development and submission processes. The most important of these changes is the elimination of the requirement for districts to submit Part II of their master plans to the State Department of Education.

A number of changes have been made in response to recommendations from board members, superintendents, teachers, and parents who were involved in developing and implementing district master plans during the past year (see Appendix D).

Numerous editorial changes have also been made to improve the clarity and usability of the document.

The *District Master Plan for School Improvement: Guide for Development and Review* has also been revised and updated by the Department of Education and is included in this document as Appendix C; it will not be available as a separate document.

DAVIS W. CAMPBELL
Deputy Superintendent
for Programs



Introduction

The School Improvement Program enacted by Assembly Bill 65 during the 1977 legislative session builds upon the experiences of the state, school districts, and schools with early childhood education (ECE) and the concepts encompassed in the *Report of the California Commission for Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education* (RISE Report). By extending these concepts to all grades, kindergarten through grade twelve, AB 65 establishes a framework for districtwide efforts to plan, implement, and evaluate efforts to improve educational programs for students. Secondly, the legislation clarifies the roles and responsibilities of those initiating school improvement efforts throughout the district—including classroom, school, district, and governing board levels; the legislation also affirms the key role of the district governing board and administration in school improvement. The interrelationship of these roles and responsibilities form the framework within which each school plans, implements, and evaluates its educational programs and processes. Each district's Master Plan for School Improvement is an important tool in establishing the context for this interrelationship of roles and responsibilities.

The Purpose of the District Master Plan

The purpose of the district master plan is to provide a framework within which the district and its schools, in partnership, can initiate and sustain school improvement efforts. It is a framework which clarifies roles and responsibilities, delineates communication channels and decision-making powers, specifies various criteria and standards for conducting school improvement and evaluating the effectiveness of such efforts, and identifies who is accountable for what. It is a framework for encompassing the comprehensive planning process at the school level with a complementary planning process at the district level.

The District Master Plan for School Improvement should be used as a means of pulling together into a single document or handbook those policies, procedures, and criteria which may be necessary to create or further enhance an effective working partnership between school and district.

The master plan is useful in many ways:

1. It provides a means whereby the district can communicate to its schools the district's policies, criteria, and procedures for conducting school improvement efforts within the district.
2. It provides a context for districtwide planning and ongoing communication between the district and its schools so that the leadership, assistance, and services provided by the district to each school are based on each school's capacity to respond to the needs of its students.
3. It provides a means of establishing accountability at all levels—classroom, school, district, and governing board.
4. It provides a means whereby the school district governing board can assess the effectiveness of its support and leadership to the schools in their task of meeting the needs of students.
5. It provides a means whereby both the governing board and each school can assess the effectiveness of each school's total program.
6. It can be the district's guide for effecting change.
7. It provides a means for identifying key points in decision-making and implementation proce-

dures that can have considerable impact on efforts by both the district and its schools to improve programs for students.

The more widely known and better understood the master plan is throughout the district, the more useful it can be. Thus, it is recommended that the district take steps to ensure that both the overall intent and specific elements of the master plan be thoroughly and accurately understood by all staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students. A working knowledge of the master plan will enable those schools already participating in school improvement to plan and execute their programs consistent with the direction and leadership of the district. By becoming familiar with the master plan, those schools not yet participating in school improvement will understand the district's plans for school improvement and will be able to prepare themselves for entering the program according to the district's phase-in schedule.

The Design of This Document

This document was designed not only to provide instructions for completing a master plan but also to explore the opportunities such a planning process at the district level can provide; in addition it identifies those issues a district may want to consider in developing each element of its master plan. ***The readers will note that throughout the document, boldface italic type has been used to identify those instructions necessary for completing each element of a District Master Plan for School Improvement according to the requirements of AB 65 and other pertinent regulations.*** Following the instructions for each element of the master plan is a brief discussion to clarify the intent of the requirements and to suggest things to do and to avoid. However, these suggestions are not to be considered requirements; they are offered as resource information to assist those who participate in the development of their district's master plan. These suggestions were developed with the assistance of parents, teachers, administrators, and governing board members who have participated in program improvement efforts in their own districts. The names of those who assisted the Department of Education in the initial development and revision of this publication appear in the Appendix D.

Instructions and Suggestions for Completing the District Master Plan

The intent of developing a District Master Plan for School Improvement is that it becomes a useful tool for both the school district and its schools in the process of district-level planning and in communicating the results of that planning process to those involved in the School Improvement Program; it is hoped that the development of the master plan will not be viewed as a state-mandated task separated from the goal of improving educational experiences for students. Thus, those involved in developing the various elements of the master plan should be aware of how the elements affect students and how they are interrelated; in this way the master plan can be developed with a sense of its wholeness rather than as a list of policies, procedures, and implementation practices to be dealt with one by one.

It is also important to note that several of the elements of the master plan coincide with key points in decision making and implementation that can have a significant impact on efforts to improve programs for students. These points should receive careful attention during the development of the master plan because of their capacity to affect program improvement efforts in a highly positive or a very negative manner. Particularly important are the following:

- Processes of communication linking all groups at district and school levels
- Staff development, including the informing of schools and their communities about school improvement
- Procedures for making decisions
- Criteria and procedures for selecting schools that are to be phased in to the School Improvement Program
- Criteria and procedures for evaluating school improvement efforts
- The district's strategies to assist schools

The roles and responsibilities required in AB 65 and reflected in the California Administrative Code, Title 5, regulations are outlined below.

A REMINDER: All instructions appear in boldface italic type; explanatory material and suggestions follow each element to be included in the district master plan; such material is offered as a resource to be used in developing the district master plan and should not be considered a requirement.

Establishing a Basic Framework for School Improvement

The ten policies, criteria, and procedures which establish the basic framework for school improvement efforts in the district are outlined below. A discussion of each of these ten elements, including Education Code and California Administrative Code, Title 5, citations, plus suggestions of things to do and to avoid follow on pages 4 through 14.

1. Procedures for providing information about school improvement
2. Policies about establishing school site councils
3. Policies regarding responsibilities of school site councils
4. Procedures for participation of school site councils in developing and updating the master plan
5. Plan for phasing in schools
6. Policies for identifying and serving educationally disadvantaged youth, limited- and

non-English-speaking students, and students with special needs and abilities
7. Criteria and procedures for approving school plans
8. Policies and procedures for evaluating school improvement programs
9. Criteria and procedures for terminating unsuccessful programs
10. Criteria and procedures for approving requests from schools for release time for advising students or conducting staff development

Each district participating in school improvement must adopt policies, criteria, and procedures regarding each of elements 1–10 described in the paragraphs that follow. Please note that the adoption of these policies and procedures is not generally an annual activity. Once the policies and procedures are established, there is no requirement that they be revised annually; they may, however, be updated at any time if the district so wishes.

Copies of each of the ten elements of the master plan must be kept at the district office and at every school in the district. In addition any revisions or updates to the district master plan must be provided to every school participating in the School Improvement Program and to schools considering participation in the program.

For further information regarding each element, refer to the Education Code and California Administrative Code, Title 5, references following each item.

1. Procedures for Providing Information

The school district governing board must establish procedures to be utilized to ensure that the principal of every school receive information governing the provisions of school improvement and that the principal provide such information to teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students. Such procedures shall ensure that (1) copies of the school improvement law, regulations, district policies, and other appropriate information are initially disseminated to all school sites; and (2) the information is current at the time participation in school improvement is considered. References: Education Code Section 52011(a); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(a).

How well a school and its community understand school improvement is a critical element when initiating school improvement efforts; effective communication is also critical in any effort to expand school improvement to include schools and grade levels that have not previously been involved in the ECE reform effort or school improvement. The procedures for effecting good communications should describe clearly:

1. How the principal of every school in the district, including the principals of those schools not yet participating in school improvement, will receive information about school improvement
2. How each principal provides this information to the teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students at his or her school

The information on school improvement that must be provided must include the following:

1. ***Copies of the school improvement law and applicable regulations***
2. ***Policies and procedures established by the district relative to school improvement as part of the District Master Plan for School Improvement***
3. ***Other appropriate information*** (Other appropriate information might include documents regarding school improvement available from the State Department of Education as well as district-developed handbooks, guides, and so forth. Department publications that may be helpful to districts include the following: *Planning Handbook; Guide for Ongoing Planning; Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program; Handbook for Assessing a Secondary School Program; Establishing School Site Councils; How to Make the Best School Site Council in the World; Discussion Guide for the California School Improvement Program;* and *Technical Assistance Guide for Proficiency Assessment.* Information on the procedures to follow in ordering Department publications appears on page ii .)

When procedures are developed to keep schools informed about school improvement, linkages to other implementation steps, such as the following, should be kept in mind:

- Establishing two-way communications and a close working partnership between each school's school site council and the district governing board
- Establishing a school site council at each school prior to phasing in the program
- Establishing staff development as an on-going activity

- Developing and updating the plan to phase schools into the program

Those who are developing policies and procedures for providing information about school improvement are encouraged to examine the accompanying suggestions to consider when developing procedures for providing information on school improvement.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Procedures for Providing Information

- Provide consistent, easy to understand, and accurate information to each of the schools in the district.
- Emphasize that the scope of school improvement is a school's total program—all students, all staff, and all learning experiences.
- Anticipate questions schools might have; and provide answers in a context the school staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students can readily understand. For example, for participating schools, point out the similarities and differences of ECE and school improvement. For nonparticipating schools, provide a description of the basic elements of school improvement in language that will be easily understood, and cite pertinent sections of the law. Also, let schools know how they can get more information.
- Emphasize the relationship between the intent and goals of school improvement and those of the district to improve the quality of its educational programs.
- Include the step of informing schools about school improvement as part of the district's ongoing staff development.
- Use various media and methods of informing people; and allow staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students opportunities to experience what school improvement can be at their school; e.g., group discussion, visits to successful school improvement schools within the district and in other districts, and so forth.
- Build in ways of checking to determine whether or not the people to be involved have an accurate understanding of school improvement.
- Consider training a cadre of staff, beginning with the principal, and parents at each school who can answer questions regarding school improvement.
- Consider making the contents of the district master plan and other important information available in the form of a handbook(s).

- Avoid giving different or hard to interpret messages from school to school, which might lead to confusion, misunderstanding, and rumors.
- Do not present school improvement as just another program to be implemented in just a few areas by a selected number of staff for some of the students.
- Avoid the extremes of providing too brief an overview of school improvement or of providing only a copy of the entire legislative bill.
- Do not present school improvement as a separate "project" which is to be "added on" to the school's regular program.
- Avoid one-time presentations with no follow-up; do not let unanswered questions and misinformation about school improvement build up.
- Avoid just "talking at" people in large-group settings only.
- Do not assume that presenting the information once, or even twice, however clearly, will necessarily result in an accurate understanding of school improvement and how to proceed to next steps.
- Avoid relying on only one person—e.g., the principal or resource teacher—to "tell all about it" to everyone: teachers, aides, other classified and certificated personnel, parents, students, and others.
- Do not assume every staff member and parent at a school will be able to "add up" all the pieces of information that have been provided into a meaningful framework on which to base their future actions.

2. Policies for Establishing School Site Councils

The governing board must adopt policies to ensure that prior to scheduled phase-in, a school site council will be established at each school to consider whether or not it wishes the school to participate in the school improvement program and to ensure that all interested persons have an opportunity to meet in public to establish such a council; the interested persons will include, but not be limited to, the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students. (Please note that the final determination as to whether a school will participate in school improvement rests with the school district governing board.) Reference: Education Code Section 52011(b).

The initial guidance given to schools by the district in establishing a school site council sets the tone of confidence or uncertainty in which the school begins its school improvement efforts. Clarity of information is essential. Therefore, it is recommended that the suggestions presented below be given careful consideration.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Policies for Establishing School Site Councils

- Answer clearly the following questions:
  - What common steps or procedures are to be taken by district and school leaders to ensure that "all interested persons have an opportunity to meet in public and establish a school site council"?
  - What does "prior to scheduled phase in" mean? What is the deadline for establishing a council? How early may a school establish a council if it wishes to? Does the district encourage the establishment of school site councils whenever a school wishes?
- Describe how a school may apply to the governing board for a planning grant if it is not scheduled to be phased into the program immediately and wishes to be. (Refer to Education Code Section 52013.)
- Provide each school with a copy of the district's policies regarding school site councils and a copy of *Establishing School Site Councils*, a document prepared by the State Department of Education in November, 1977.
- Encourage staff, parents, and students from each school that plans to form a school site council to visit or invite to their school members of school site councils which are operating effectively.
- Avoid providing information that merely restates the language of AB 65 about establishing school site councils and does not explain "what to do" and "how to do it."
- Avoid establishing an inflexible schedule that does not provide for shifts in readiness or desire to participate in school improvement.
- Avoid making school staff and parents spend time figuring out on their own how to establish a council and what the district's policies for school site councils are.
- Do not expect written descriptions of "what a school site council is" to provide an experience of how one might function.

3. Policies Regarding Responsibilities of School Site Councils

The governing board must adopt policies regarding the responsibilities of school site councils and establish communication procedures to ensure reasonable opportunities for each council or its representatives to meet with the governing board. References: Education Code Section 52034(c); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(h).

The development of policies and procedures outlining the responsibilities of school site councils represents one of the most critical and sensitive points in decision making and in the implementation of school improvement. The policies and procedures adopted should:

1. Set the tone for openness and cooperation.
2. Establish as a common purpose the improving of programs for students.
3. Clearly outline the powers of the school site council and the responsibilities for which it is to be held accountable.
4. Provide for direct access to the school district governing board as well as specify the channels of communication to be used through the district administration.

5. Describe procedures to ensure a close and effective working relationship between the councils and the governing board.

Such policies must be consistent with the intent of AB 65 and should outline any additional responsibilities that the board wishes the councils to perform.

Several suggestions to consider when developing policies regarding the responsibilities of the school site council follow.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Policies Regarding Responsibilities of School Site Councils

- Highlight in the policies and procedures those roles and responsibilities of the school site council that are different from those of the school advisory committee under ECE, Title I, and other advisory groups.
- Give clear directions for the school site councils in carrying out the responsibilities they have for the processes of planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement efforts.
- Be clear that the ultimate authority and responsibility for the conduct of school improvement lies with the governing board.
- Describe how the functions of the school site council relate to the traditional functions of district administrators, principals, teachers, and so forth.
- Get the opinions and ideas of the members of the various school advisory groups and school site councils, board members, and district office personnel before establishing policies.
- Do not assume school site councils have the same advisory function as school advisory committees. Avoid asking district administrators, board members, school staff, parents, and students to identify on their own the differences between the roles of the two kinds of groups.
- Avoid the extremes of describing the council's responsibilities so narrowly that the council cannot respond to the problems at the school or so vaguely that the policies give little or no guidance.
- Do not forget to describe how the governing board and school site councils work together in achieving the best possible decision making at both levels.
- Avoid describing the lines of communication and functions of the school site council to the governing board and of the principal to the district administration without also describing how they interconnect.
- Avoid establishing policies and procedures without a thorough examination of past experiences with school advisory committees, a careful reading of AB 65, and discussion with others outside the district who have developed effective and efficient school councils.

4. Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan

The school district governing board must establish procedures that provide opportunities for school site councils to participate in the development and updating of the district master plan and district strategies to assist schools in order to ensure that the master plan is keyed to the school improvement objectives of participating schools. References: Education Code Section 52034(c); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4021.

Ensuring that the master plan is keyed to the school improvement objectives of schools is essential to the success of school improvement efforts throughout the district and to the development of a close school-district partnership. The policies and the procedures to implement those policies, which are included in the district master plan, as well as the strategies to assist schools, should be developed with the status of schools in mind. That is not to say that the district should follow the lead of the schools; quite the contrary. It is to say that once the basic directions and goals for the district have been established, the district should consider the actual situations of its schools—their capacity to plan and implement school improvement—as it guides and supports schools in their efforts to achieve district goals and their own objectives. Accordingly, the district should seek input from school site councils in developing and updating the elements of the master plan, which are described in this document. It is also recommended that the district consider the suggestions that follow regarding the development of procedures for involving school site councils in developing and updating the district master plan.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan

- Meet with representatives of school site councils to assess what works well and what does not and to discuss issues *prior* to developing policies and procedures.
- Follow up and use the school site councils as sounding boards for reviewing drafts of the policies and procedures.
- Meet with each school site council on a school-by-school basis when establishing strategies to assist each participating school.
- Avoid waiting until after the final draft of the master plan or its revisions are written before involving school site councils.
- Avoid involving school site councils only as ratifying groups.
- Avoid developing strategies for assisting schools under the assumption that all schools have the same needs and priorities.

5. Plan for Phasing In Schools

The school district governing board must establish a plan for phasing schools into the school improvement program. The plan must include policies and/or procedures used to identify schools with the greatest number or concentrations of educationally disadvantaged youth. The procedures must ensure that at least one-half of the district's elementary schools and one-half of the district's secondary schools participating in any year are eligible to receive either ESEA Title I or state compensatory education funding. References: Education Code sections 52039(b)(2)(A) and 52011; California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(b).

The criteria and procedures established for phasing in schools to the program should offer schools incentives to participate and reward them in their efforts to improve programs. The degree of commitment by the school leaders, staff, and parents is an important ingredient for successful program improvements. In developing such criteria and procedures, districts may wish to consider the following suggestions for phasing schools into the School Improvement Program.

Suggestions to Consider When Phasing Schools into the School Improvement Program

- Involve staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students in establishing the criteria and procedures for phasing schools into the School Improvement Program.
- Be aware that the guidelines for determining ESEA Title I and state compensatory education eligibility are already established by federal and state laws and regulations; apply them uniformly to all elementary and to all secondary schools in the district.
- Realize that any school among the group of schools that are eligible for ESEA Title I and state compensatory education funding may be chosen as a school of great need; schools do *not* have to be chosen in rank order of need.
- Consider a wide variety of factors in determining the criteria for phasing in schools, such as readiness; enthusiasm; desire and commitment of principal, staff, and parents, and, in secondary schools, students; leadership
- Avoid postponing opportunities for people to participate in school improvement in their district. Avoid disappointing schools on the phase-in schedule by making a last minute change in the criteria.
- Do not alter these procedures from school to school.
- Avoid creating for the ESEA Title I and state compensatory education schools criteria and procedures which are radically different from those used for selecting the other 50 percent of the participating schools; do maximize incentives and encouragements as much as possible.
- Avoid establishing school phase-in criteria that are based solely on need and that do not provide incentives for excellence.

Suggestions to Consider When Phasing Schools into the School Improvement Program (Continued)

skills of the principal and key staff; school climate; understanding of and support for school improvement goals by all groups at the school; and potential for success.

- Allow for a variety of ways to obtain various kinds of information about the school; e.g., observation through on-site visits, panel review, and interviews with selected staff, parents, and students.
- Consider reassessing frequently the order for phasing in schools, perhaps annually, so that data will be current with the status of each of the schools.
- Consider research findings which identify characteristics associated with success in implementing change.
- Avoid making judgments based on one source of information; e.g., how well the school can write a plan or how good its achievement scores are.
- Do not discourage schools from making early efforts to prepare for being phased into the program.
- Avoid assuming that the conditions in your schools or district are so unique that the experiences summarized in research will not apply to your situation.

6. Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities

The governing board must define policies and/or procedures to be used by schools in (1) identifying educationally disadvantaged youth; limited- and non-English-speaking students; and students with special needs and abilities, including the gifted; and (2) developing instructional and auxiliary services to meet their special needs as part of the school improvement plan. Such policies regarding educationally disadvantaged students shall, to the extent feasible, be consistent with district policies for the identification of students eligible for compensatory education. References: Education Code Section 52015(b); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(c).

The establishment of these policies for all schools in the school improvement program in the district, regardless of sources of funding available (e.g., Title I funds and Economic Impact Aid), allows the district to establish its own policies, not the policies of an outside agency which some schools must comply with and others do not. The district may also wish to consider having the policies apply to all schools, not just those involved in school improvement. In fact, the establishment of these policies is particularly important for those schools in the district which serve students with special needs and abilities but do not receive any special state or federal monies to do so and, therefore, may not have policies to provide direction. In doing so, the district can take the leadership role and state its commitment to these students, the priority for resources, and its expectations for schools in serving students' needs. In establishing policies for this element of the master plan, districts may wish to consider the following suggestions for developing policies for identifying and serving students with special needs and abilities.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities

- Describe clearly the policies to be used by all schools to identify students with special needs and abilities and how their needs should be planned for and met through the school improvement plan.
- Do not expect each school to interpret the various laws and regulations in a uniform manner throughout the district.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities (Continued)

- State clearly what the district's commitment to students with special needs and abilities is and what level of priority the district has placed on the support services for the schools in which these students are enrolled.
- Consider including all schools in these policies, not just those in school improvement.
- Do not assume that schools are aware of the district's priority-setting process and what this means in terms of tangible services.
- Avoid the possibility of double messages and conflicting messages from school to school.

7. Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans

The governing board must establish criteria and procedures which the district uses in approving or disapproving school improvement plans in order to (1) ensure that school implementation plans comply with the provisions of the school improvement law and regulations; and (2) judge the potential effectiveness of the plan in responding to the needs of students at each school and the goals of school improvement. References: Education Code sections 52034(a) and 52035; California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(f).

In affirming the key role of the district in school improvement efforts, AB 65 places the review and approval of school plans with the district governing board. It is important to note that this review includes not only criteria for determining compliance but also standards for determining quality of program planning and for judging each plan's potential effectiveness.

In developing criteria and procedures for approving or disapproving school plans, districts are encouraged to consider the following suggestions.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans

- Involve teachers, principals, parents, administrators, evaluation personnel, and program specialists in establishing criteria and procedures for reviewing school plans.
- Focus on those aspects of the planning process and the plan which reinforce good planning.
- Bear in mind that the criteria should address two levels: (1) compliance with law and regulations; and (2) potential effectiveness of the plan in responding to student needs.
- Plan for thorough inservice training on the district's evaluation procedures and criteria so that they are clearly understood by all those involved in school improvement at the district and at each participating school.
- Before schools begin their planning or updating efforts, provide inservice training on program planning and explain clearly what the established procedures and criteria for determining legal compliance and potential effectiveness are.
- Avoid imposing criteria and procedures which may not be useful to schools.
- Avoid overemphasizing the plan as a written document; do include criteria which focus on the planning process and on the potential of the plan as a guide for implementation.
- Do not review for compliance only; don't pass up an opportunity for exerting leadership for improving the quality of programs.
- Do not allow schools to plan and implement programs without a clear understanding of district-adopted criteria and procedures.
- Do not allow schools to develop or update their plans without getting assistance in understanding the various options and procedures in the program planning process.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans (Continued)

- Consider establishing a process to ensure communication between each school's school site council and the district throughout the process of developing or updating the plan.
- Utilize the following State Department of Education documents as resources in selecting criteria: (1) *Planning Handbook;* (2) *Guide for Ongoing Planning;* (3) *Manual of Requirements for Schools Funded Through the Consolidated Application;* and (4) *Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program* and *Handbook for Assessing a Secondary School Program.*
- Avoid waiting until the last minute to give the school feedback on its plan and planning process; to the degree possible, eliminate surprises.
- Do not fail to use all available resources, particularly regular on-site visits by persons knowledgeable about both the process of planning and the options for planning.

8. Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs

The governing board must establish policies and/or procedures for the evaluation of schools participating in the school improvement program. Such policies and/or procedures must be consistent with the requirements for school-level evaluation contained in Education Code Section 52015(g), which requires assessment of (1) the degree to which the school is meeting its improvement objectives as assessed by parents, teachers, other school personnel, and pupils; (2) student achievement; (3) improved school environment; and (4) the degree to which fiscal expenditures meet the criteria of the school improvement plan. Such policies and/or procedures shall ensure the adequacy of school procedures in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. References: Education Code Section 52034(e); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(d).

The policies and procedures for evaluation of school improvement efforts should address two levels: (1) the district's need for districtwide evaluation standards; and (2) each school's need for flexibility in designing evaluation approaches appropriate to its plan. In developing this element of the master plan, the district may wish to examine the following suggestions for establishing policies and procedures for evaluating school improvement programs.

Suggestions to Consider When Establishing Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs

- Obtain input from teachers, parents, school and district administrators, and evaluators in establishing the district evaluation criteria and procedures.
- Establish evaluation procedures which allow for diversity of programs from school to school, as appropriate, to meet the needs of students.
- Consider a variety of ongoing evaluation approaches which assess all aspects of the school's program. Such approaches might include classroom observation, interviews, and so forth.
- Avoid imposing evaluation criteria or procedures which may not be meaningful or useful to the district and its schools.
- Avoid establishing evaluation procedures which are inflexible or that discourage program diversity when it is appropriate for students; don't establish procedures which will require schools to implement their programs differently from the way they planned or which will require an unreasonable amount of work to gather data and so forth in order to complete the established procedures.
- Do not limit evaluation only to student achievement data gathered at the end of the year.

Suggestions to Consider When Establishing Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs (Continued)

- Build in procedures which are effective for evaluating the program's success in meeting the needs of students with differing needs; e.g., transient, gifted, and limited-English-speaking students.
- View evaluation as a positive process for growth, one which builds on success and is part of the total school improvement program; do feed evaluation information back into the ongoing assessment process.
- Link together, when appropriate, the criteria for approving or disapproving school plans and the criteria and procedures for evaluating school programs.
- Do not design an evaluation procedure which does not include indicators of the progress of all students.
- Avoid looking at evaluation as an end in itself or as a negative process; instead, consider it as a way to strengthen school programs.
- Do not consider the criteria for approving or disapproving school plans as separate from and unrelated to criteria for assessing the quality of the programs as implemented in accordance with those plans; do emphasize closing the loop between evaluation of the planned program and further planning.

For additional information regarding policies and guidelines, suggested procedures for district and school evaluation, and a catalog of resources available to assist districts and schools in developing effective evaluation approaches, see the Department's *Handbook for the Evaluation of Consolidated Programs.*

9. Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

The governing board must establish procedures for terminating implementation grants to schools which are unsuccessful over a four-year period in substantially meeting the objectives of their approved plans. Such criteria and procedures must reflect academic achievement, program review, and other indicators of educational improvement established by the district governing board. Such procedures must include funding reallocation procedures. References: Education Code Section 52034(f); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(g).

The adoption of criteria for identifying unsuccessful programs is a means whereby the district can establish minimum levels of acceptable performance on the part of its schools. The criteria developed can and should reflect the district's priorities and needs of students. In developing such criteria, the district may wish to consider the suggestions provided below.

Suggestions to Consider When Establishing Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

- Involve teachers, principals, district office administrators, evaluators, and, in districts with secondary schools, students, in developing termination criteria and procedures.
- Use existing district and school evaluation procedures where appropriate.
- Include in the assessment many different dimensions of the school program.
- Avoid arbitrarily imposing criteria and procedures for termination.
- Avoid establishing entirely new evaluation procedures solely for this purpose.
- Do not base the judgment solely on achievement data or on program assessments.

Suggestions to Consider When Establishing Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs (Continued)

- Use longitudinal information whenever possible.
- Do not base the criteria on indicators collected at a single point in time; e.g., at the end of four years only.
- Define clearly and explicitly the criteria and procedures developed; do describe them clearly to all participating schools as early in their involvement in school improvement as possible.
- Avoid developing vague criteria or procedures that cause anxiety because they are not understandable or only serve to threaten.
- Build in early warning procedures which call for special assistance to a school when it is needed.
- Do not wait until the fourth year of unsuccessful performances before notifying the school or before providing special strategies to assist the school; don't surprise schools with the criteria after the fact.

10. Requests for Release Time to Advise Students or Conduct Staff Development Programs

The governing board must establish criteria and procedures for approving or disapproving requests by schools, as part of their school improvement plan, for the provision of time during the regular school year to advise students or conduct staff development programs and receive full average daily attendance reimbursement, pursuant to Education Code Section 52022. Such time shall not exceed eight days each year for each participating staff member. References: Education Code Section 52022; California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(e).

The intent of this provision is to give school districts maximum flexibility in implementing required staff development programs and advising students. In order to make this option a viable possibility for schools when they are developing their programs, the criteria and procedures must be clearly understood in advance. In planning for release time, be aware that:

- Legislation enacted since the passage of AB 65 permits the use of release time during the planning grant year.
- Within the district, school improvement plans may differ among participating schools to permit the schools to respond to the unique needs of their students.
- A *maximum* of eight days of release time per staff member can be applied for. Application for release time is to be on a staff-member basis rather than on a schoolwide basis; e.g., a school may request six days of release time for some staff members and only one or two days (or even none) for other staff members. The amount of time will depend on the staff development priorities, objectives, and timeline established by the school.
- Release time may be used for only staff members who are directly involved in the program for the grade levels participating in school improvement.

In developing this element of the master plan, districts may wish to consider the suggestions that follow.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Criteria for Approving School Requests for Release Time to Advise Students or to Conduct Staff Development

- Involve parents and staff in developing the criteria and procedures.
- Avoid bypassing parents or involving them in a cursory way at any step in the development and implementation of these procedures.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing Criteria for Approving School Requests for Release Time to Advise Students or to Conduct Staff Development (Continued)

• Involve parents in the school level needs assessment process to assess the need for release time and to determine what activities should take place.	• Avoid assuming that parents are already well enough informed about their child's school to be able to appreciate the need for release time.
• Provide parents with a full description of what the time is to be used for, what will be done, what will be accomplished; do provide for advance and repeated announcements of the days scheduled.	• Avoid underestimating the extent to which some parents must change their daily schedule when their children stay home from school.
• View each school's request in terms of student and staff needs.	• Avoid imposing inflexible criteria and procedures which will be uniformly applied regardless of the varying school needs or which provide the same number of days for every school which requests release time.
• Be aware that staff development is a most critical element in school improvement and has a direct effect on program quality. Its priority in the legislation is clear.	• Avoid underestimating the importance of staff development in planning for and implementing a program which is responsive to student needs and of providing "timely advice" to students to assist them in taking full advantage of what the school can offer.
• Plan staff development programs by utilizing a variety of sources to identify needs; e.g., analysis of student achievement data, observation by supervisor or peers as well as self-assessment.	• Avoid basing the staff development program on needs identified through self-assessment alone.
• Recognize the value of varying the method and approach in the staff development program to meet more appropriately the needs of the group addressed.	• Do not limit staff development programs to just one method or approach.
• Review the criteria for assessing the quality of staff development programs outlined in the *Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program* and *Handbook for Assessing a Secondary School Program*, and follow the steps outlined: – Analyzing skills needed to implement the plan – Analyzing current skills of staff – Basing the staff development program on the discrepancy between skills needed and skills available – Building in a means of determining whether skills have been learned, as demonstrated in change of behavior	• Do not approve requests for release time unless a thorough needs assessment has been conducted, a good plan has been developed for using the time to accomplish specific tasks, and a clear and workable means of evaluating the activities has been developed.
• Include procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of release time activities at both the school and district levels; do involve both staff and parents in developing and carrying out such procedures.	• Avoid assuming that each parent and staff member will be able to determine on his or her own the value gained from the release time opportunities.

Instructions and Suggestions for Completing Strategies to Assist Schools

In addition to developing and implementing the policies, criteria, and procedures which establish the basic framework for school improvement efforts in the district, districts are also responsible for designing annually strategies to assist schools. Education Code Section 52034(b)(1) and the California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 3930, require districts to develop strategies to assist schools receiving planning grants and all schools implementing consolidated application programs, regardless of the types of funding received. These strategies, keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools, must be submitted annually to the State Board of Education for approval.

The strategies to assist schools implementing consolidated application programs may be described and submitted to the State Department of Education in either of two ways: (1) as part of each school's school plan; or (2) under separate cover at the time that the school plans are submitted or at the time that Form A-127D is submitted. Descriptions of strategies to assist planning grant schools are to be included in the planning grant applications.

1. **District Strategies to Assist Schools Receiving Planning Grants**

The district's strategies to assist schools that are receiving planning grants must be keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools. References: Education Code Section 52034(b)(1) and (g).

2. **District Strategies to Assist Schools Implementing Consolidated Application Programs**

The district's strategies to assist schools that are implementing programs under the consolidated application must be keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools. References: Education Code Section 52034(b) (1); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 3930.

The development and implementation of strategies to assist schools during their planning grant year and during implementation of their programs constitute the most important linkage in the school-district partnership for school improvement. It is a linking process which requires a close working relationship between school and district and the development of means whereby the needs of schools can be matched with appropriate resources and services.

The district's strategies to assist schools in planning, implementing, and evaluating their programs must be keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools. In so doing, the district should recognize both the similarities and differences of objectives, needs, and priorities among participating schools. For example, noting similar needs for articulation between primary, intermediate/junior high, four-year high schools, and senior high schools might lead to a districtwide approach to the issue and, thus, similar strategies to assist schools. In like fashion, a group of schools may have a common need, such as assistance in evaluating program effectiveness for limited- or non-English-speaking students, or schools in their planning grant year may need inservice training on how to plan and the options for planning. Still other strategies must be designed to match the objectives, priorities, and needs of staff and students unique to individual schools.

The strategies developed should encompass all the resources available to the district, not just those available to the district as a result of centralized services from consolidated application

monies. Thus, the district should utilize personnel, materials, and other resources available from local, county, state, and federal sources when developing its strategies to assist schools. Please note that strategies are to be developed for each school funded under the consolidated application, including those funded by Title I/SCE only.

During the year in which the schools receive their planning grants, particular attention should be given to staff development needs. During the implementation years, attention should be given to the shifts in needs and to the priorities of schools from one year to the next as they accomplish some objectives, state new priorities, or replan to better meet others.

In developing strategies to assist its schools, the district may find it helpful to consider the following suggestions.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing the District's Strategies to Assist Schools

- Tailor the strategies to the particular stage of school improvement each school is in; e.g., planning grant year, initial year of implementation, and transition from ECE to school improvement.
- Make the allocation of services a school-by-school consideration so that the strategies will be responsive to each school's improvement objectives, needs, and priorities; do allow for flexibility of people, materials, and fiscal resources from school to school in accordance with differing needs and priorities.
- Consider developing a procedure by which schools may have input into assessing the effectiveness of district support services in helping schools meet the needs of their students.
- Look at how personnel could be used more effectively and how current services could be refocused and reallocated.
- Identify talented people at the schools and outside the district who can serve as resource people to schools in planning, implementing, and evaluating the programs.
- Think about how you can organize, train, and utilize personnel and about which strategies and methods would be most effective in assisting schools; do realize that the answer to these questions lies in the specific objectives, needs, and priorities of each school.
- Have both the school site council and the school district office do their "homework" prior to getting together to develop strategies to assist the school; planning grant schools should assess their capacity to plan and their possible needs for inservice training; implementing schools should state their objectives and refine their priorities and needs.
- Focus on ways each school site council can communicate clearly to the district administration its school's needs.
- Do not lose track of the purpose of developing strategies to assist schools—to assist each school participating in school improvement in achieving its school improvement objectives which were outlined in the school's plan and approved by the governing board.
- Do not allocate resources in a general "across the board" fashion; don't base your analysis on generalized statements of need.
- Do not neglect to assess the process by which all available resources are allocated to and specifically tailored for the unique needs of students and staff at each school.
- Avoid focusing on "how to get more" to be delivered in the same ways.
- Do not assume that all support staff must come from the district office.
- Do not assume that last year's answers to these issues will be appropriate for this year.
- Do not begin discussion before student-staff needs are fully analyzed and the district has assessed the effectiveness of the services it has provided.
- Do not assume school site councils know how the district can assist them or who in the district they should communicate with.

Suggestions to Consider When Developing the District's Strategies to Assist Schools (Continued)

- Consider making staff development needs one of the highest priorities.
- Make a continuing assessment of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the strategies provided throughout the year; do note any major modifications which implementing schools might make in their priorities as a result of their ongoing planning process or which planning grant schools might make when shifting from planning to preparation for implementation.
- Do not respond to short-term needs at the expense of long-term strategies.
- Do not wait until the end of the year to make any needed modifications in the strategies to assist schools.

Completion Date for the District Master Plan

The adoption of policies, criteria, and procedures for elements 1–10 of the district master plan is not generally an annual activity. Once these policies, criteria, and procedures have been established, there is no requirement that they be revised annually; rather, they should be updated when the district perceives a need for modification. In such instances, the district must provide such modifications to each school participating in or considering participating in school improvement.

Completion of strategies to assist schools requires joint school-district planning every year. The results of that joint planning must be submitted annually to the State Department of Education. Strategies to assist schools implementing consolidated application programs may be submitted as part of each school's plan or under separate cover along with the school plans or with Form A-127D. Strategies to assist planning grant schools are to be included in the application for planning grants.

A REMINDER: The elements of the District Master Plan for School Improvement which are to be kept at the district office and at *every* school in the district are elements 1–10. Note that none of these ten elements is to be submitted to the Department of Education. There is no prescribed format for recording elements 1–10 of the master plan. Districts should select a format which best facilitates widespread understanding of the district master plan; e.g., a Handbook on School Improvement or merely a looseleaf collection of excerpts from governing board minutes.

ANOTHER REMINDER: Strategies to assist schools must be submitted annually. If the strategies are submitted as a separate document (not as part of each school's school plan), two copies should be submitted to the Department of Education.

Appendix A

Special Provisions for Small Districts Having Only One School Serving a Grade Level

Some elements of the district master plan do not apply to small districts with only one school serving a grade level because the requirement has already been addressed in the school plan or because there are no other schools serving the same grade level in the district, thereby making the requirement inapplicable for the district. These elements, which should be marked N/A (not applicable), are:

Element 1–Procedures for Providing School Improvement Information to Schools
Element 2–Policies for Establishing School Site Councils
Element 4–Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan
Element 5–Plan for Phasing In Schools
Element 6–Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities
Element 8–Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement
Element 9–Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

NOTE: "Small districts having only one school serving a grade level" is defined as those districts whose grade-level structure is such that all classrooms serving a grade level or age span are located at one school (e.g., K-3, 4-6; K and 4-8, 1-3; 9-10, 11-12); and whose units of average daily attendance are as follows: fewer than 901 units of a.d.a. if an elementary district, fewer than 301 units of a.d.a. if a high school district, and fewer than 1,501 units of a.d.a. if a unified district.

Appendix B

Special Instructions for Districts in Cooperatives

For districts that are members of cooperatives, the instructions for completing the district master plan are the same as for districts applying independently, except as noted here. All policies and procedures to be adopted by governing boards are to be adopted by the governing board of *each* district in the cooperative. Please note, however, that only elements 3, 7, and 10 are required of small school districts which have only one school serving a grade level.*

With respect to strategies to assist schools in planning, implementing, and evaluating their programs, the instructions contained in this document and in the revised *Manual of Requirements* are applicable, with the following additions and exceptions:

1. *All* resources available to the local educational agency and district, not just those made available through centralized services in the A-127D, should be considered, and the resulting solution procedures or approaches should be developed accordingly. For local educational agencies that are offices of county superintendents of schools, this must include services provided by the county office to direct service districts from funds made available to counties to serve such districts. For all cooperatives, Section 3945(b) of the California Administrative Code, Title 5, requires each coop to "annually execute a formal agreement with each participating district regarding levels and types of services and amounts to be charged for those services." Thus, the development of this formal agreement should be part of the development of strategies to assist each participating school. (This includes schools funded by Title I/SCE only as well as those which receive school improvement funds.)

2. For single-school school districts, district strategies to provide assistance are synonymous with school solution procedures; therefore, the description of strategies to assist the school need include only those strategies made possible by resources outside the district; i.e., by the coop office through centralized services funds from the consolidated application, direct services from the office of the county superintendent, and through other agreements.

*"Small districts having only one school serving a grade level" is defined as those districts whose grade-level structure is such that all classrooms serving a grade level or age span are located at one school (e.g., K-3, 4-5; K and 4-8, 1-3; 9-10, 11-12); and whose units of average daily attendance are as follows: fewer than 901 units of a.d.a. if an elementary district, fewer than 301 units of a.d.a. if a high school district, and fewer than 1,501 units of a.d.a. if a unified district.

Appendix C

District Master Plan for School Improvement: Guide for Development and Review

The development and use of the district master plan for school improvement is a continuing process of defining roles, responsibilities, policies, and procedures necessary to initiate effectively and sustain school improvement efforts throughout the district. Clearly, a workable framework will not come about overnight. Trial and error, changing conditions of district and schools, and so forth suggest an evolving process. Thus, the guide in this appendix is designed so that it can be used over time as a self-assessment tool as districts develop and use their district master plans. It is important to note, however, that while the guide is intended to be helpful to districts, the method and extent of its use are district choices. A district may use portions of it throughout the year or may choose not to use it at all. The guide will be used by State Department of Education reviewers as a tool for providing program assistance and for reviewing district master plans for approval.

The following paragraphs contain descriptions of the contents of the guide, how districts might choose to use it, and how it will be used by the State Department of Education in reviewing the district master plan.

Contents of the Guide

This guide contains discussions of each of the ten elements of the district master plan as outlined earlier in this document. Each element is discussed separately.

As a means of assisting districts in their assessment of where they are in developing and using the district master plan, the following stages are suggested for each of the elements:

- ☐ The school district has not started to develop procedures.
- ☐ The school district is in the process of developing procedures.
- ☐ The governing board has adopted procedures which have not been used yet.
- ☐ The school district is using adopted procedures.
- ☐ The school district is using an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well the policies/procedures/criteria are working and is modifying them when necessary. Recommended steps at this stage are to:
  - Pinpoint the problem with the policies/procedures/criteria, and check the perception with people at different levels within the communication system.
  - Identify whether the problem is with the clarity or content of the procedures or whether it is with the implementation of the procedures.
  - If you decide that major revisions of the written procedures are necessary, refer to some of the suggestions for the first two stages of development.

Consideration of these descriptions is one way among many that districts can determine where they are in developing and using each element.

On the page for each element is a discussion of what steps or actions the district might take relative to its status for that particular element. The ideas which are given for each stage are a combination of procedural and content-related suggestions, which are, of course, not exhaustive. They are offered to assist districts in identifying what the district might want to do next to develop further and make better use of the district master plan and what assistance or support might be needed to do so.

The page for each element also contains an outline of aspects which should be included in each element of the district master plan as required by law and regulations. The purpose of this section, which appears at the top of the page, is to assist both districts and State Department of Education reviewers in checking for consistency of district-adopted policies, procedures, and criteria with program issues of law and regulation.

Finally, in addition to developing and implementing the policies, criteria, and procedures which establish the basic framework for school improvement efforts in the district, districts are also responsible for designing strategies to assist schools. Education Code Section 52034(b)(1) and Section 3930 of the California Administrative Code, Title 5, require districts to develop annually strategies to assist schools receiving planning grants and schools implementing consolidated application programs. These strategies, keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools, must be submitted annually to the State Board of Education for approval. As described in *Manual of Requirements for Schools Funded Through the Consolidated Application*, such strategies are to be jointly developed by the schools and the district and/or cooperative office. Strategies to assist planning grant schools are to be included in the planning grant application. Strategies for schools implementing their programs are to be recorded in each school's school plan *or* under separate cover and submitted either with the school plans or with Form A-127D. Space is provided in this guide to summarize the review of district strategies and to provide a means for examining where the district is in developing and using such strategies to assist its schools.

How a District* Might Use the Guide

Since there is such a great variety in the size, organization, and resources of school districts, different districts will want to make different uses of this guide. Large districts, small districts, districts in cooperatives, and districts with special organizational structures will have different needs which the district master plan can help meet. This guide should be used in the way that best supports the particular district in making the district master plan a more useful leadership, management, and communication tool within the district. A district may choose not to use the guide at all except in meeting with the reviewer as the reviewer uses it to provide feedback to the district. Or a district may choose to use it throughout the year for guidance in developing or modifying elements of the district master plan and as a periodic self-assessment tool. Or a district may choose to use it annually, either at the beginning or end of the year or at the time of program reviews in the district. For maximum benefit, the guide should be used to identify:

- Where the district is in the development of each element of the district master plan
- Ideas about what the district might do to develop further and make better use of the district master plan
- What assistance and/or support is needed in further developing and using the district master plan
- What must be included in each element to be consistent with law and regulations

How a Reviewer Will Use the Guide

The State Department of Education reviewer, when visiting the district, will use this guide for two purposes: (1) as a framework for assisting the district in developing and making more effective use of the district's master plan; and (2) as an instrument for reviewing the district master plan for approval, element by element.

In reviewing the district master plan for approval, the reviewer will use the statements describing what is to be included in each element to be consistent with law and regulations. If, however, an element is still being developed or is not consistent with law or regulations, the reviewer will use the stages of development to discuss possible next steps and follow-up ideas.

Since the development and use of the district master plan is a continuing process of defining roles, responsibilities, policies, procedures, and criteria, the processes of assistance and review for approval will continue. The on-site program review will include a look at the district master plan–progress made toward developing and more effectively using the district master plan and ensuring consistency with law and regulations. Program and technical assistance efforts in district or regional areas of the state will also focus on the district master plan. Such opportunities for external assistance and review of the district master plan are designed to support districts in developing and effectively using an approved district master plan for school improvement.

Special Provisions for Small Districts Having Only One School Serving a Grade Level

Some elements of the district master plan do not apply to small districts which have only one school serving a grade level because the requirement has been addressed in the school plan or because there are no other schools with the same grades in the district, thereby making the requirement inapplicable for the district. These elements, which should be marked N/A (not applicable), are:

Element 1–Procedures for Providing School Improvement Information to Schools
Element 2–Policies for Establishing School Site Councils
Element 4–Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan
Element 5–Plan for Phasing In Schools
Element 6–Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities
Element 8–Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement
Element 9–Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

NOTE: "Small districts having only one school serving a grade level" is defined as those districts whose grade-level structure is such that all classrooms serving a grade level or age span are located at one school (e.g., K-3, 4-6; K and 4-8, 1-3; 9-10, 11-12); and whose units of average daily attendance are as follows: fewer than 901 units of a.d.a. if an elementary district, fewer than 301 units of a.d.a. if a high school district, and fewer than 1,501 units of a.d.a. if a unified district.

*Everyone in a district has an important role in the development and use of the district master plan–teachers, parents, administrators, other school personnel, students, governing board members, and community members. For this reason the use of the word "district" throughout this guide is meant to refer to the district as it encompasses schools, the governing board, school site councils, school advisory committees, and other community members.

Element 1: Procedures for Providing School Improvement Information to Schools

Element 1 of the district master plan contains the district's procedures for providing information about school improvement to its schools. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted procedures for providing information about school improvement to schools, make sure that these procedures are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the procedures must ensure that:

- *The principal of every school receives information about school improvement.*
- *Each principal provides such information to teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students.*
- *Copies of the school improvement law, regulations, district policies, and other appropriate information are initially disseminated to all school sites.*
- *The information is current at the time participation in school improvement is considered.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions. Consider school site council members, teachers, other school personnel, parents, school and district administrators, governing board members, community members, and students.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations and ideas about what other districts do.
- Consider what communication channels or systems are being used or have been used in your district, and determine how they have worked for the different groups which will be involved in school improvement efforts – parents, teachers, other school personnel, administrators, students, and community members.

☐ If you are in the process of developing procedures:

- Decide how to share written drafts of the procedures to get as much feedback as efficiently as possible.
- Consider trying some different ways of getting information to schools to see how well they work.
- Think about how you'll be able to judge the effectiveness of proposed procedures once you put them into action. How will you be able to tell whether they work?

☐ If procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Check to see that district office personnel, school principals, teachers, parents, other school personnel, and secondary students understand what the procedures are.
- Examine your procedures to see whether it is clear who is responsible for doing what and when.
- Make sure you will have a way of knowing how well the information procedures work once you start using them.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted procedures:

- Check to see whether the procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than those that are described in the district master plan. If you think you might want to modify the procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the procedures are working. Your procedures are probably working well if:

- The methods of spreading school improvement information are appropriate to district audiences.
- People know how to get more information or to get questions answered about school improvement.
- Schools not involved in school improvement have an accurate understanding of the program.
- The methods of disseminating information have resulted in a workable knowledge of school improvement throughout the district.

NOTE: This element is not required in small districts that have only one school serving a grade level.

Element 2: Policies for Establishing School Site Councils

Element 2 of the district master plan is the district's policies for the establishment of school site councils. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such policies (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted policies for establishing school site councils, make sure that these policies are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the policies must ensure that prior to scheduled phase-in:

- *All interested persons (including, but not limited to, principals, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students) have the opportunity to meet in public to establish a school site council.*
- *Each council considers participation in school improvement.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop policies:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review such resources as the school improvement law, *Establishing School Site Councils, How to Make the Best School Site Council in the World,* and policies adopted by other districts.
- Review how school councils or committees have been formed in the past in terms of what has worked well and what has not worked well.

☐ If you are in the process of developing policies:

- Consider how to share written drafts of policies with principals, teachers, parents, other school personnel, district office staff, board members, and community members.
- Think about how you will evaluate policies once you start using them.
- Consider the types of guidelines or assistance that can be given to schools considering participation in school improvement.

☐ If policies have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Make sure it is clearly understood who is responsible for what and by when in establishing school site councils.
- Check to see that all schools scheduled for phase-in understand the policies and their implications.
- Make sure you have a way of knowing how well the policies work once they are implemented.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur when you start using your policies.

☐ If you are using adopted policies:

- Review what happened when the opportunity was provided for people to meet to establish school site councils. How did people know about it? How many people showed up? Who were they? Did everyone understand what was happening? Were the results different at different schools? If so, why?
- Check to see whether the policies are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than those planned. If you think you might want to modify the policies, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the policies are working. Your policies are probably working well if:

- Each school site council, in considering participation in school improvement, understood its role in the process, had enough time, had adequate and accurate information for making a judgment, and had opportunities to receive assistance or to get questions answered.
- Staff, parents, and students at schools which are scheduled for school improvement phase-in understand the policies and what their responsibilities are for implementing these policies.

NOTE: This element is not required in small districts that have only one school serving a grade level.

Element 3: Policies and Procedures Regarding Responsibilities of School Site Councils and Procedures for Their Communication with the Governing Board

Element 3 of the district master plan is the district's policies for the responsibilities of school site councils and the procedures for their communication with the local board. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such policies and procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted these policies and procedures for school site councils, make sure that they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the policies and procedures must:

- *Identify the responsibilities of the school site councils, consistent with Education Code sections 52012, 52013, and 52021.*
- *Demonstrate that there will be reasonable opportunities for each council, or its representatives, to meet with the local governing board.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop policies and procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations, *Establishing School Site Councils, How to Make the Best School Site Council in the World,* and policies and procedures established by other districts.
- Think about how school councils and committees have functioned and communicated with the board in the past and which aspects of this have worked well or not worked well.
- Consider also developing policies and procedures for school advisory committees in your district (e.g., Title I/state compensatory education [SCE], bilingual, preschool) so that their relationship to, similarities with, and differences from school site councils will be clear.

☐ If you are in the process of developing policies and procedures:

- Consider how the functions of school site councils identified in law can be made more clear through district policies and procedures, particularly the relationships among the functions of school site councils and the traditional functions of district administrators, principals, teachers, and so on.
- Consider which aspects of policies and procedures should be consistent throughout the district and which should be left for individual school determination.
- Identify a procedure for sharing written drafts of policies and procedures and getting as much input as possible.

☐ If policies and procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.
- Make sure you have identified some techniques you will use to evaluate how well the policies and procedures work once you start using them.
- Pay particular attention that the responsibilities given to school site councils do not conflict with those defined in law.

☐ If you are using adopted policies and procedures:

- Review school site council bylaws to see whether they reflect district policies and procedures.
- Identify how much and what kind of use has been made of opportunities for school site councils to meet with the governing board. Have school site councils and the board felt that both the use of and results of these procedures have been positive?
- Check to see whether the policies and procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the policies and procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than those planned. If you think you might want to modify the policies and procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the policies and procedures are working. Your policies and procedures are probably working well if:

- The district policies are helpful and understandable to school site councils, and they are specific enough to provide guidance but not so detailed as to restrict councils from being able to address the variety of issues at the school.
- Each school site council understands its responsibilities and how it can arrange to meet with the governing board.

Element 4: Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan

Element 4 of the district master plan is the district's procedures to be used by school site councils as they participate in developing and updating the district master plan. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted procedures for school site councils in developing and updating the district master plan, make sure that these procedures are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the procedures must ensure that:

- *School site councils have opportunities to participate in the development of the district master plan.*
- *School site councils have opportunities to participate in updating the district master plan.*
- *The district master plan is keyed to the school improvement objectives of participating schools.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations and ideas from other districts.
- Decide how to share written drafts of procedures to get as much feedback as possible as efficiently as possible.

☐ If you are in the process of developing procedures:

- Consider how the procedures can encourage and support school site council involvement in developing the district master plan.
- Think about how the procedures for involvement in developing the district master plan may be different from the procedures for involvement in updating it.
- Identify the primary school improvement objectives of participating schools, and discuss how these can be reflected in and supported through the district master plan.

☐ If procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Examine your procedures to see whether it is clear what the responsibilities are of both school site councils and district office personnel.
- Check to see that all school site councils understand what the procedures are.
- Make sure you have a method of evaluating how well the procedures work.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted procedures:

- Review what use has been made of the procedures. How many school site councils took advantage of them? Have the opportunities been timely ones? Did their participation result in development or revision of the content of the district master plan?
- Check to see whether the procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the procedures are working. Your procedures are probably working well if:

- Each school site council understands the district master plan and how council members can be involved in developing and updating it.
- School site council participation has improved the usefulness and effectiveness of the district master plan.

NOTE: This element is not required in small districts that have only one school serving a grade level.

Element 5: Plan for Phasing In Schools

Element 5 of the district master plan is the plan that will be used by the district to identify the order of schools to be phased into school improvement. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using that plan (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted a plan for phasing in school improvement schools, make sure that this plan is consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the plan must:

- *Include policies and/or procedures to identify schools with the greatest number or concentrations of educationally disadvantaged youth.*
- *Demonstrate that at least one-half of the district's elementary schools and one-half of the district's secondary schools participating in any year are eligible to receive either ESEA Title I or SCE funding.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop a plan:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations and other districts' plans.

☐ If you are in the process of developing a plan:

- Think about how schools have been identified for phase-in in the past and the extent to which these procedures worked or did not work in encouraging schools to participate in school improvement efforts.
- Check that you have procedures for identifying educationally disadvantaged youth and that they are used consistently throughout the district.
- Examine how schools are ranked to receive Economic Impact Aid and for participation in ESEA Title I. However, be aware that half of the schools in the district may be phased in on the basis of other criteria, thereby alternating a school eligible for compensatory education funding with a school that is not eligible for compensatory education funding. In establishing criteria for schools not eligible for compensatory education funding, explore criteria that provide incentives for improving.
- Brainstorm different district criteria that could be used for ranking schools for the phase-in schedule.
- Give as many people as possible within the district a chance to give input about what the phase-in criteria and procedures will be.

☐ If a plan has been adopted, but you have not started using it:

- Check to see that the criteria for selecting schools for phase-in are stated clearly enough so that any school could apply them.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.
- Make sure you have a way to check how well the plan is working, and make changes if necessary.

☐ If you are using an adopted plan:

- Check that there are not contradictions between the additional criteria used to phase in schools with high numbers or concentrations of educationally disadvantaged students and those criteria used to phase in other district schools.
- Check to see that the criteria include a variety of factors; e.g., commitment, preparedness to act, and leadership.
- Check to see whether the plan is being implemented as described. If it is, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well it is working. If the plan is not working as described, ask yourselves why it is working differently and whether it is more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the plan, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the plan is working. Your plan is probably working well if:

- The criteria and procedures for phasing in schools allow for changing conditions at schools and, thus, change in the phase-in order. Has the phase-in schedule changed at all from year to year? What kind of support or consideration is given to a school that is very anxious to be phased in earlier than scheduled?
- The criteria encourage schools to participate in school improvement efforts and provide for guidance in preparing to participate.

Element 6: Policies and/or Procedures for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities

Element 6 of the district master plan is the district's policies and procedures to be used by schools in identifying and serving students with special needs. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such policies and/or procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted these policies and/or procedures, make sure that they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the policies and/or procedures must:

- *Describe how the following students will be identified: (1) educationally disadvantaged youth; (2) limited- and non-English-speaking students; and (3) students with special needs and abilities, including, but not limited to, mentally gifted minors.*
- *Identify how instructional and auxiliary services will be provided to meet the special needs of the three groups of students listed above.*
- *Be consistent, to the extent feasible, with district policies for identifying students eligible for compensatory education.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop policies and/or procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations and the laws and regulations pertaining to other programs in your district which address the needs of students with special needs and abilities.
- Consider what procedures schools use now in identifying and serving students with special needs.
- Plan for coordination between district policies and/or procedures and individual school planning for serving these students.

☐ If you are in the process of developing policies and/or procedures:

- Consider what the relationship should be between the districtwide policies for serving students and the more specific ways in which each school can implement those policies.
- Consider developing these policies and/or procedures so that they can be applied to all schools rather than just to school improvement schools.
- Identify methods for circulating drafts of policies and/or procedures to get maximum input and involvement as efficiently as possible.

☐ If policies and/or procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Examine your policies and/or procedures to see whether they are clear enough so that everyone will understand who is responsible for doing what and when in the identification of services and provision of services to students with special needs.
- Check that your policies and/or procedures are specific enough to provide for consistent application from school to school.
- Make sure you have planned for evaluating the policies and/or procedures as you start using them.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.
- Check that your policies and/or procedures are consistent with the law and regulations (see above).

☐ If you are using adopted policies and/or procedures:

- Ask school personnel who work with these students how helpful the district policies and/or procedures are. Do they make sense? Can they be implemented with current resources? Is additional training needed? How much growth are students making?
- Check to see whether the policies and/or procedures are being implemented as described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the policies and/or procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the policies and/or procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the policies and/or procedures are working. Your policies and/or procedures are probably working well if:

- Identification criteria are used accurately and consistently from school to school.
- District policies and/or procedures are used in the development of school plans and are helpful in planning.

NOTE: This element is not required in small districts that have only one school serving a grade level.

Element 7: Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans

Element 7 of the district master plan is the criteria and procedures that will be used by the district to approve school plans. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such criteria and procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted these criteria and procedures, make sure that they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the criteria and procedures must identify:

- *How the district will ensure that school plans comply with the provisions of the school improvement law and regulations*
- *How the district will judge the potential effectiveness of school plans in meeting the needs of students and goals of school improvement*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop criteria and procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the *Manual of Requirements, Planning Handbook*, criteria used by the State Department of Education for school plan review, and criteria and procedures used by other districts.
- Decide how to share written drafts of criteria to get as much feedback as possible as efficiently as possible.

☐ If you are in the process of developing criteria and procedures:

- Work with schools in your district that have been planning over the past few years in order to identify successful aspects of those programs when determining criteria for potential effectiveness of the planned program.
- As you discuss different criteria for potential effectiveness, think about which ones will be feasible to apply to school plans. Consider criteria which focus on the usefulness of the plan as a guide for implementation; e.g., is it understandable?
- Consider the resources available to your district in developing the procedures for approving plans.
- Consider how the process can provide for timely feedback to schools and feedback that is specific enough to facilitate improvements in plans and programs.
- Check with people who have been involved in both developing and reviewing plans, and try to solicit creative ideas.

☐ If criteria and procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Examine your criteria and procedures to see whether they are specific enough and understandable enough to provide guidance to the school site councils throughout the development of their plans.
- Check your procedures to see whether it is clear who is responsible to do what and by when in approving school plans.
- Check that you have procedures for evaluating how well the plan approval process works.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted criteria and procedures:

- Check to see whether all schools get feedback about the compliance and potential effectiveness of their plans. Does the feedback make sense to people at schools? Are schools able to use the feedback to improve their planning and programs? Is the feedback received in time to get maximum benefit from it? Are resources available to assist schools in using the feedback?
- Check to see whether the criteria and procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the criteria and procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the criteria and procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the criteria and procedures are working. Your criteria and procedures are probably working well if:

- Schools have understood the criteria and have been able to apply them in developing plans.
- The approval process has resulted in increased planning skills, plans that are easier to implement, and better programs for students.

Element 8: Policies and/or Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs

Element 8 of the district master plan is the policies and/or procedures that will be used by the district to evaluate its school improvement programs. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such policies and/or procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted these evaluation policies and/or procedures, make sure that they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the policies and/or procedures must reflect:

- *The following school-level requirements for the evaluation of (1) the degree to which the school is meeting its improvement objectives; (2) student achievement; (3) improved school environment; and (4) fiscal expenditures*
- *A standard of adequacy for school evaluation procedures*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop policies and/or procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review such resources as the school improvement law and regulations, *Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program, Handbook for Assessing a Secondary School Program, Handbook for the Evaluation of Multifunded Educational Programs,* ideas about what other districts do, and regional or county office evaluation resources.
- Decide how to share drafts of the policies and/or procedures to get maximum input and involvement.

☐ If you are in the process of developing policies and/or procedures:

- Consider how the district has evaluated the effectiveness of school programs in the past and the ways in which this has worked well or not worked well.
- Think about what the relationship between school evaluation procedures and district evaluation procedures should be and how the evaluation of school improvement programs should relate to evaluation procedures for other consolidated application programs.
- Review your criteria and procedures for approving plans (Element 7), and think about how district program evaluation can be consistent with and linked to the on-site program review and the review of plans.
- Consider developing approaches for gathering information to enable you to get a complete picture of the program—how effective it is for students and how well the program is being implemented—so that you will not be dependent on one source of information about the program.
- Consider district evaluation techniques that will give helpful information back to people in a positive way.

☐ If policies and/or procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Examine your policies and/or procedures to see whether responsibilities and the timeline for evaluation are clearly identified.
- Check with school improvement schools to see whether they understand how the district evaluation policies and procedures could be implemented at their school and how they relate to other school evaluation procedures the school might use.
- Check that you have a method of getting feedback on how the evaluation procedures are working.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted policies and/or procedures:

- Check to see whether the policies and/or procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, determine how well they are working.
- If the policies and/or procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the policies and/or procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the policies and/or procedures are working. Your policies and/or procedures are probably working well if:

- The results of the different evaluation procedures are analyzed and interpreted for use by different audiences.
- Schools get feedback about the quality of their programs and of their own evaluation procedures. Such feedback is understood by schools, gives guidance or ideas for improving the program, comes at appropriate times, and can be used to improve the program.
- Changes have been made across the district as a result of evaluating school improvement.

NOTE: This element is not required in small districts that have only one school serving a grade level.

Element 9: Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

Element 9 of the district master plan is the criteria and procedures that will be used by the district to terminate unsuccessful school improvement programs and to reallocate money within the district. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such criteria and procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted criteria and procedures for terminating unsuccessful programs, make sure they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the criteria and procedures must:

- *Include criteria and procedures for determining whether a school has been unsuccessful in substantially meeting its objectives over a four-year period.*
- *Include criteria and procedures which reflect academic achievement, program review, and, if desired, other district-established indicators of educational improvement.*
- *Identify how funds will be reallocated.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop criteria and procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations, *Manual of Requirements, Handbook for the Evaluation of Multifunded Educational Programs*, and criteria and procedures being considered by other districts.

☐ If you are in the process of developing criteria and procedures:

- Review district and school evaluation procedures (Element 8), and consider how those might serve as a foundation for, or at least be consistent with, termination procedures.
- Discuss possible "other indicators" of educational improvement which your district might want to adopt.
- Consider criteria that will provide feedback to schools over time; for instance, criteria that would let a school know where it stands each year, not just after four years.
- Consider establishing several criteria, rather than just one or two, which capture the full range of school improvement efforts; e.g., planning, implementation of the planned program, and improvements in achievement and environment.
- Consider how your reallocation procedures might relate to your phase-in plan.

☐ If criteria and procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Examine the procedures to see whether it is clear who is responsible to do what and by when.
- Check to see that each school understands the criteria and how they will be applied.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.
- Check that you have established a method of evaluating how well your criteria and procedures are working.

☐ If you are using adopted criteria and procedures:

- Check to see whether the criteria and procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the criteria and procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the criteria and procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the criteria and procedures are working. Your criteria and procedures are probably working well if:

- The criteria and procedures are understood by each school.
- Schools are receiving feedback annually at a time that helps them "close the loop" between evaluation and planning.
- Resources are available to assist schools that are not meeting the criteria.

NOTE: This element is not required in small districts that have only one school serving a grade level.

Element 10: Criteria and Procedures for Approving Requests for Release Time

Element 10 of the district master plan is the criteria and procedures that the district uses to approve schools' requests for release time for staff development or to advise students. In looking at this element, find out where the district is in developing and using such criteria and procedures (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted these criteria and procedures, make sure that they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, this element must identify:

Criteria and procedures for approving or disapproving schools' requests for release time during the regular school year to advise students or conduct staff development

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop criteria and procedures:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task and how to initiate discussions.
- Collect and review resources such as the school improvement law and regulations, staff development regulations under AB 551 (Chapter 966, Statutes of 1977), and criteria and procedures used by other districts.
- Consider what criteria and procedures, if any, have already been used in approving release time and how well they worked or did not work.

☐ If you are in the process of developing criteria and procedures:

- Make sure that teachers, administrators, other staff, and parents are involved in discussing these criteria and procedures.
- Consider criteria that will be flexible or broad enough to use for schools with different types of staff development and counseling needs.
- Identify the specific kinds of things that you feel should be included in a school's request for release time (e.g., how parents and community, as well as staff, will be involved in planning release time activities, how parents and community will be informed about release time days, and how the planned release time activities would be evaluated).
- Identify resources that can be used to help schools plan for and utilize release time.

☐ If criteria and procedures have been adopted, but you have not started using them:

- Check to see that each school understands the criteria and how they will be applied.
- Examine the procedures to see whether it is clear who is responsible to do what and by when.
- Check to see that you have a method to evaluate your criteria and procedures as you begin using them.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted criteria and procedures:

- Review how schools have used the criteria and procedures. Are they written clearly enough for schools to use accurately? Have they been used by schools? Have they given guidance to schools in planning for release time? Have release time activities been successful?
- Review how those persons applying the criteria and procedures have used them. Have they been manageable? Have they produced understandable and adequate requests? Have they been accessible to all school improvement schools? Have they allowed for reasonably fast action on requests?
- Check to see whether the criteria and procedures are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the criteria and procedures are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the criteria and procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the criteria and procedures are working. Your criteria and procedures are probably working well if:

- The criteria and procedures are understood by the schools and have provided guidance to schools in planning, conducting, and evaluating their release time activities.
- Those involved (staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students) generally agree that the release time activities were well managed and that their stated purpose(s) was achieved.

A. District Strategies to Assist Schools Receiving Planning Grants

In looking at the district's strategies to assist schools receiving planning grants, find out where the district is in developing and using such strategies (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix).

If the governing board has adopted these strategies to assist planning grant schools, make sure that they are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the district master plan must include:

Strategies to assist planning grant schools–Such strategies may be described (1) within each school's school plan; or (2) under separate cover and submitted with Form A-127D by October 1, 1979, or with the school plans by July 1, 1979.

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you are starting to develop these strategies:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task, and identify ways of initiating discussions with the school site councils and other key staff and parents at each planning grant school.
- Consider how the district has supported schools as they planned in the past; and think about which aspects of those strategies worked well and which did not work well.

☐ If you are in the process of developing strategies:

- Find out what kinds of skills, strengths, needs, and priorities each planning grant school has.
- Consider both short-term and long-term strategies.
- Work with each school receiving planning grants to determine the support needs of these schools.
- Consider developing strategies school-by-school to respond to unique needs as well as common needs.
- If schools have needs that cannot be met by the district, explore community, county, regional, state, and federal resources which can be made available to meet these needs.
- Consider ways of assessing the effectiveness of current services to schools and how the services might be reorganized or strengthened to provide better support to schools.
- Think about how to build flexibility into the strategies so that they can change as schools change.
- If you are a direct service district or in a cooperative, ask the office of the county superintendent or cooperative office to work closely with you in developing strategies.

☐ If strategies have been adopted, but you have not started using them yet:

- Examine your strategies to see whether it is clear who is responsible to do what and by when.
- Check to see whether the strategies are specific enough to relate clearly to the improvement priorities of each planning grant school.
- Check with each planning grant school to determine whether they understand the district support they should expect.
- Make sure you have a procedure to evaluate how well the strategies are working and a procedure for changing the strategies at midyear if you determine they are not working well.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted strategies:

- Visit planning grant schools to discuss the strategies. Do those at the school know what the strategies are? Have the strategies had an effect on school activities? Have the strategies been viewed as appropriate to the school's needs? Has the use of the strategies been viewed as helpful?
- Check to see whether the strategies are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the strategies are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than those planned. If you think you might want to modify the procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the strategies are working. Your strategies are probably working well if:

- Each planning grant school understands what district support it is to receive and when.
- School planning and programs have changed in a positive way as a result of using the strategies.
- The ongoing evaluation process has worked well in assessing how well strategies are working; strategies have changed as schools have changed or as new planning grant schools have been phased in.
- The strategies have been viewed by each planning grant school as appropriate to their needs and helpful in assisting them in their planning process.

NOTE: Strategies to assist schools are to be recorded in the planning grant application.

B. District Strategies to Assist Schools Implementing Consolidated Application Programs

In looking at the description of the district's strategies to assist each school implementing a consolidated application program, find out where the district is in developing and using such strategies (see the five stages described in the introduction to this appendix) as well as in submitting them to the State Department of Education.

If the governing board has adopted these strategies to assist schools implementing consolidated application programs, make sure that the strategies are consistent with law and regulations. To be approvable, the strategies must be consistent with the intent of law and regulations and must:

- *Be keyed to the improvement objectives of all consolidated application schools.*
- *Encompass available district resources.*

Given your district's stage in developing and using this element, see the suggestions below for some ideas about steps or actions to take. Check the appropriate box below.

☐ If you have not started to develop strategies:

- Decide who should be involved and/or represented in the task, and identify ways of initiating discussions.
- Consider how the district has supported consolidated application schools in the past and which aspects of those strategies worked well and which did not work well.

☐ If you are in the process of developing strategies:

- Find out what kinds of skills, strengths, needs, and objectives each school has; assist each school in refining its analysis and interpretation of its evaluation data—e.g., on-site program review and assessment of the school plan—and in closing the loop between evaluation and further planning.
- Consider both short-term and long-term strategies.
- Work with consolidated application schools to determine the support needs of these schools.
- Consider developing strategies school-by-school to respond to unique needs as well as commonly shared needs.
- If schools have needs that cannot be met by the district, explore community, county, regional, state, and federal resources which can be made available to meet these needs.
- Consider ways of assessing the effectiveness of current services to schools and how they might be reorganized or strengthened to provide better support to schools.
- Think about how to build flexibility into the strategies so that they can change as schools change.
- If you are a direct service district or in a cooperative, ask the office of the county superintendent or cooperative office to work closely with you in developing strategies.

☐ If strategies have been adopted, but you have not started using them yet:

- Examine your strategies to see whether it is clear who is responsible to do what and by when.
- Review each school's plan to check that the strategies are consistent with and support the school's improvement objectives and that they have been incorporated into the school's plan.
- Check to see whether the strategies are specific enough to relate clearly to the improvement objectives of each consolidated application school (including those with Title I or SCE funds only).
- Check with consolidated application schools to determine whether they understand the district support they should expect.
- Make sure you have procedures to evaluate how well the strategies are working.
- Think ahead to see whether you can anticipate any problems that might occur.

☐ If you are using adopted strategies:

- Visit implementation schools to discuss the strategies. Do those at the school know what the strategies are? Have the strategies had an effect on school activities? Have the strategies been viewed as appropriate to the schools' needs? Has the use of the strategies been viewed as helpful?
- Check to see whether the strategies are being implemented as they are described in the district master plan. If they are, use an ongoing evaluation process to determine how well they are working.
- If the strategies are not working as described, ask yourselves why they are working differently and whether they are more effective or less effective than planned. If you think you might want to modify the procedures, see the suggested steps for ongoing evaluation described in the introduction to this appendix.

☐ If you are using an ongoing evaluation process, determine how well the strategies are working. Your strategies are probably working well if:

- Each school understands what district support it is to receive and when and is able to use such assistance effectively.
- Each school's program and ongoing planning have changed in a positive way as a result of using the strategies.
- The ongoing evaluation process has worked well in assessing how well strategies are working; strategies have changed as school programs have changed or new implementation schools have been phased in.

NOTE: Strategies to assist schools are to be developed for every school receiving consolidated application funding (including schools receiving only Title I and/or EIA funds). The strategies may be described and submitted to the State Department of Education as part of each school's school plan or under separate cover at the time that the school plans are submitted or at the time that Form A-127D is submitted.

Appendix D

Acknowledgments

The *District Master Plan for School Improvement* was developed with the assistance of parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, other district administration personnel, and governing board members throughout the state. The efforts of these people who generously shared their time and ideas are gratefully acknowledged.

Shizuko Akasaki
Assistant Superintendent, Compensatory Instructional Programs Division, Los Angeles Unified School District

William E. Baker
Coordinator, Early Childhood Education, Office of the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools

Grace Baldock
Parent, San Bernardino Unified School District

Dean Barnes
Principal/Special Assignments, San Diego City Unified School District

Lois Braun*
Supervisor, Elementary Curriculum, Santa Monica Unified School District

Mary W. Byrd
Director, Federal and State Funded Programs, San Francisco Unified School District

Rudy Campos
Director, Compensatory Education, Visalia Unified School District

Delbert Cederquist
President, California School Boards Association

Elizabeth Elcock
Principal, Mount Diablo Unified School District

Rita Esquivel
Supervisor, State and Federal Projects, Santa Monica Unified School District

Carol Ferrell
Parent, Reed Union Elementary School District

Nick Floratos
Superintendent, Rio Linda Union Elementary School District

Helen Fried*
Director, Curriculum Services, ABC Unified School District

Pat Griggs
Director, Special Services, Westminster Elementary School District

Robert Hart
Director, Special Projects, Long Beach Unified School District

Jim Haslip
Principal, San Mateo City Elementary School District

Patricia Horkan
Coordinator, ECE/Title I, San Mateo City Elementary School District

Pauline Hooper
ECE Program Coordinator, Los Angeles Unified School District

Jerry Jacobsen*
Director, Funded Programs, Garden Grove Unified School District

Margaret Kennedy*
Consultant, Early Childhood Education, Curriculum and Instructional Services, Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools

Martha Keizer*
ECE Program Coordinator, Long Beach Unified School District

Pat Larsen
Board Member, Palm Springs Unified School District

Kurtis J. Lyle
Director, Federal and State Programs, Fremont Unified School District

Peggy Lindsey
Teacher, Fresno Unified School District

Larry Lucas
Principal, Huntington Beach Union High School District

*This person assisted with the 1979 revision of this document.

Carol Monell
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Cajon Valley Union School District

Maribel Marinelli
Parent, Thousand Oaks

Bobbi Mulholland*
Curriculum Coordinator, Irvine Unified School District

Frank Ortega
Teacher, San Dieguito Union High School District

Evelyn Page
Curriculum Coordinator, Chula Vista City Elementary School District

Lyn Perino
Consultant, Elementary Education, Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools

James Potter
Curriculum Coordinator, Rio Linda Union Elementary School District

Linda Rigney*
Parent, Garden Grove Unified School District

Judith Rogers
ECE Coordinator, South San Francisco Unified School District

Robert A. Sanchis*
Superintendent, Laguna Beach Unified School District

Connie Savidge
Teacher, Ocean View Elementary School District

Robert Scheirbeck*
Superintendent, Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District

Mary Schneider*
Principal, Ocean View Elementary School District

Gary Scott
Teacher, Gilroy Unified School District

Janice Smith
Assistant Principal, Irvine Unified School District

Jessie Thacker
Principal, Garden Grove Unified School District

Shirley Thornton
Principal, San Francisco Unified School District

Rosemma B. Wallace
Executive Associate Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District

Elvie Watts
Director, Early Childhood Education, Sacramento City Unified School District

Barbara Winars*
Coordinator, Staff Development, Westminster Elementary School District

Joy Weiss
ECE Coordinator, Cupertino Union Elementary School District

Janet Wortman
Title 1 Coordinator, Folsom-Cordova Unified School District

---

*This person assisted with the 1979 revision of this document.

78-194 03-0893 5-79 3,500